

General Information

Policy Name:	Hospital Approved Abbreviations
Category:	Health Information Management
Applies To:	All Staff
Key Words:	Abbreviation, Abbreviated
Associated Forms & Policies:	
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This Version's Effective Date:	07/10/23

Policy

The Medical Record, in both paper and electronic format, contains documentation related to the patient, patient's condition and episode of care.

Entries must be legible and understandable to others and when re-read by the individual documenting.

Abbreviations must be limited to generally-acceptable entries.

Abbreviations should be limited throughout the documentation of the medical record. "Text messaging-type" abbreviations are never acceptable (i.e. 2day for the word today.)

The hospital does not have an official approved abbreviation list and suggests the use of standard medical dictionaries and other resources to provide definitions as necessary for the staff.

Procedure

When using abbreviations, they must be clearly defined and in context to ensure that all ancillary staff caring for the patient will understand the abbreviation so continuous patient care is not disrupted or miscommunicated.

1. If you are unfamiliar with an abbreviation, you may search the medical resources that you have available or the hospital Intranet Library. For example, see the Taber's Dictionary, appendix 6 for abbreviations. You may request clarification from the service who documented that abbreviation.

Note: Some medical resources and dictionaries may contain abbreviations that are considered unapproved and are not allowed for use in our medical records.

2. Unapproved Abbreviations may **not** be used at any time, including hand-written documentation and electronically generated documentation. (See [addendum for unacceptable abbreviations](#) in all documentation formats.)

References

https://www.jointcommission.org/-/media/tjc/documents/resources/patient-safety-topics/patient-safety/do_not_use_list.pdf

[Do Not Use List Fact Sheet | The Joint Commission](#)

Definitions

Not Applicable

Addendums, Diagrams & Illustrations

Non-Acceptable Abbreviation List

Applies to all orders and all medication-related documentation that is handwritten (Includes free-text computer entry) or on pre-printed forms.

Do Not Use	Use Instead
U (units)	Write "Units"
ug	Write "mcg" or "micrograms"
IU (International Unit)	Write "International Unit"
Q.D., QD, q.d., qd	Write "Daily"
Q.O.D., QOD, q.o.d, qod	Write "Every Other Day"
Trailing zero (X.0 mg)*	Write X mg
Lack of leading zero (.X mg)	Write 0.X mg
MS, MSO4	Write "Morphine Sulfate"
MgSO4	Write "Magnesium Sulfate"
NOTE: Apothecary symbols are not allowed	